

## Where I Stand on Health Care Legislation

As it currently stands, I am opposed to the House draft health care legislation. I am hopeful that when Congress returns in September, the process will be more bi-partisan and we will be able to produce something that works for the American people.

I continue to believe that the current direction of health care reform relies too heavily on taxes on individuals and small businesses, and the overall cost of health care legislation remains too high. Moreover, though changes have been made to how the public option will work, the overall bill does not represent my belief in a free-market approach to health care reform.

Additionally, I have signed onto several letters expressing concern over specific parts of the bill. You can view those letters [here](#):

Bright supports small businesses in health care reform legislation

Bright sends letter opposing small business surtax in health care legislation

Bright: health care reform cannot fund abortions

Bright supports Blue Dog principles in health care reform

If you would like to look at the current healthcare bill, please click:

[H.R.3200 America's\\_Affordable\\_Health\\_Choices\\_Act](#)

There are also a few articles from sources in the district outlining my opposition to the current legislation. You can read them [below](#).

Bright: No to current healthcare bill

Lance Griffin

Dothan Eagle

July 17, 2009

Congressman Bobby Bright said he will vote against the current House version of the Healthcare Reform Bill unless it changes drastically.

"Not at all, not the way it is now," Bright said during a phone interview with the Dothan Eagle.

Bright said he opposes a "public option" for healthcare reform. According to the current House bill, the public option would be a government subsidized plan that competes alongside current private healthcare plans. Bright said the public option placed too many healthcare decisions in the hands of government officials and could put private plans at a competitive disadvantage.

"I have said this from the beginning, that I would support a healthcare plan that is market driven," Bright said.

Bright said he also opposed tax increases on individuals making more than \$250,000 annually because he believed it would disproportionately affect small business owners.

"For them to try to pay for healthcare reform on the backs of small businesses, I can't support that," he said.

Bright and 21 other members of Congress sent a letter Thursday to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi expressing concern over the tax.

"Especially in a recession, we need to make sure not to kill the goose that will lay the golden eggs of our recovery," the letter stated.

Two other healthcare bills are currently making their way through the Senate. Bright said one is sponsored by Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., and is similar to the House version. He said another, sponsored by Sen. Max Baucus, D-Montana, "has potential" as well as some bipartisan support.

The House bill is about 1,800 pages. Bright said he has been reading the bill since it was released last week. President Barack Obama is urging Congress to pass healthcare reform as early as September.

"I have a copy of the House bill and before I either support it or turn it down, I will have read it and I will understand it. I will be an informed voter," Bright said.

'Blue Dogs' focus of health care debate

Bill Theobald and Deborah Barfield Berry

The Montgomery Advertiser

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WASHINGTON -- Fiscally conservative House Democrats, including Alabama Rep. Bobby Bright, thrust themselves into the middle of the health care debate last week, blocking legislation drafted by their own party's leadership.

"We're not 'Blue Dogs' anymore -- we're the bulldogs," Bright said. "We're slowing this thing down. There's no rush. We need to talk more about this. We need to investigate this. We need our constituents more involved in this."

If the 52 members of the Blue Dog Coalition remain united against the bill, they could bar its passage in the House Energy and Commerce Committee and later in the full House.

On Tuesday, objections by Blue Dog members of the committee to the cost and other aspects of the health care bill prompted committee chairman Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., to delay discussing and amending the legislation for at least a day.

Also Tuesday, President Barack Obama met with Democrats on the committee.

Eight of those Democrats are Blue Dogs, who said they have serious problems with the bill's estimated cost: \$1 trillion over 10 years.

Only one committee Blue Dog, Rep. Jane Harman of California, spoke in favor of the bill.

Members of the Blue Dog Coalition say the House bill:

Wouldn't reduce the growth in health care costs.

Would punish small-business owners by raising taxes on families making more than \$350,000 per year as a way to pay for health care reform.

Would not insure all of the approximately 46 million people without health insurance. The bill would leave about 9 million people uninsured, the Congressional Budget office estimates.

Bright said lawmakers are hearing from constituents who are concerned about the escalating cost of health care and who are "even more frightful that whatever they replace it with might be worse."

"We do have some challenges with the cost and the accessibility of health care right now," said Bright.

Bright said he wouldn't vote for the bill as it's written because he opposes a government-run program, a proposed mandate that businesses provide insurance for workers or pay a payroll tax, and proposed new taxes on individuals and families to help finance health care reform.

He called the mandate "un-American" and said it "creates a tremendous burden" for businesses.

"They're already on shaky ground with the economy being unstable," he said.

Republican leaders are targeting Blue Dogs and freshmen Democrats in hopes of lining up more opposition.

"There's a lot of disgruntlement on the other side of the aisle," said Rep. Charles Boustany, R-La., a physician and a GOP pointman on the issue.

Boustany said that even if all the Republicans oppose the measure, they will need Democrats to defeat the legislation.

"A lot is going to depend on the Democrats," said Boustany. "We don't have the votes. The pressure is on them."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California downplayed any conflict within her party on Tuesday, as did Obama.

The president has said he wants health reform legislation to pass before Congress leaves for its August recess.

Two House panels, the Ways and Means Committee and the Education and Labor Committee, have approved the House health care reform bill.

A similar bill has won approval in the Senate health committee, but that bill doesn't address how to finance the health care reform effort. The Senate Finance Committee is struggling to reach bipartisan agreement on that issue.

Some lawmakers say Congress may have to work through its normal monthlong August break to reach consensus on health care reform.

"I think everybody on Capitol Hill ... wants quality affordable health care for all citizens," Bright said. "We need to throw party labels out the window and get to work. If we quit playing 'gotcha' politics, we can get this done."